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**A. S. WATSON & CO., LIMITED,
The Hongkong Dispensary,**

Established A.D. 1841.

Hongkong, 2nd November, 1893.

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Correspondents are requested to forward their names
and address with communications addressed to the
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All letters for publication should be written on one
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No anonymous or signed communications that have
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The Daily Press.

HONGKONG, NOVEMBER 13th, 1893.

SIR JAMES CRICHTON BROWN, in his
address delivered at the opening
of the new building of the
Shedfield School of
Medicine, deals in a very suggestive
manner with the subjects of optimism
and pessimism, and contrasts Mr. Pearson's
views as to the future of the race.

Referring to the evolution of the
human mind, he points out that
in the lower races, men, such as the
Australians and Tasmanians, the posterior
sensory lobes are smaller, in proportion
to the total brain mass, than in Europeans,
and the circumference of the region of the
skull in which these lobes are located is greater
in the brachycephalic skulls, which are
characteristic of the bronze age in Eng-
land, than in the dolichocephalic skulls
which are exclusively found in barrows
of the pre-metallic period. It seems, indeed,
reasonable to suppose that cerebral evolution,
if still in progress, is going on at the present
day most actively in these centres, for success
in the struggle for existence as now con-
ducted depends more on quickness of percep-
tion than on muscular activity. The
demand for physical exertion in the struggle
is reduced, while facilities for sensory in-
dulgence are enhanced vastly. There is
universal pampering of sense and craving
for material enjoyment, and hence it may
well be that the evolution of sentience which
has unquestionably gone on in past ages is
now proceeding rapidly, and that parallel
with it there are growth and elabora-
tion of structure in the sensory centres.

But, he continues, the evolution of sentience,
whether its rate be slow or rapid, involves
increase in quantity and refinement in
quality of two orders of impressions—of
painful impressions on the one hand, and of
pleasurable impressions on the other. And
as sentient beings, we must anxiously ask
ourselves, does this increase in the same
ratio? Does pleasure predominate over
pain, or pain over pleasure? Is sorrow out-
running joy, or does joy distance sorrow?

Is the sum total of pain and sorrow, on the
one hand, or of joy and pleasure on the
other, greater in the civilized man than in
the savage? Is the increment of the two
equal? To these questions Sir James
Crichton Brown, in his address, has given
answers on an optimistic basis, though not
ignoring the suffering and pessimistic
spirit at present prevailing. The higher
we ascend in the scale of sentience, he
says, the more does pleasure predominate
over pain. As an instance of this he
gives the gratification that it gives us more
than counterbalances the affliction of harsh
or jarring sounds, even as these assail us
in large towns. This is a remark that may be

commended to those educationists, happily
a diminishing number, who look upon the
teaching of music to a child as a waste of
time, forgetting that although few can
become skilled musicians all can be taught
to understand and appreciate music and
that their capacity for happiness is thereby
proportionately increased. Proceeding,
Sir James Crichton Brown says, the
sense of duty is vision raised to a higher
power, and surely it opens up to us
vast tracts of enjoyment in nature and art,
with distressful patches only here and there.
On the active side of our nature, too, pleasure
prevails, for the enjoyment accompanying
muscular exercise, the sense of effort
and consciousness of power, is far greater
than any suffering that comes from weariness
or fatigue. But the more accustomed
we become to pleasure the less tolerant are
we of pain, and hence, our historic
writings nowadays under comparatively
trifling twinges. After tracing the connection
between the varying states of the
nervous centres and this capacity for
pain and pleasure, and suggesting the
resemblance between the experience of
individuals and of nations, the speaker went
on: "It is by an appeal to experience
that the propounders of pleasure over
pain, or of pain over pleasure, can at any
period be determined, and such an appeal
at this moment affords ground for
believing that we in this country are at
present—and only temporarily, let us hope
—in the trough of the wave, and have
"amongst us more than the average allow-
"ance of suffering. Pessimism or pessimis-
"tic tendencies are widely diffused, and
"many thoughtful persons in these days
"surveying the misery that exists under the
"sun hold the opinion of SCHOPENHAUER
"that it would have been much better if that
"luxuriating had never been able to evolve
"the phenomena of life on the earth. The
"old faiths have lost their hold. Life is no
"longer a probation but an end in itself, and
"the passion for wealth possesses the poor
"human soul. Society is destitute of real
"gladness, and is permeated by ostentation
"and jealousy. Art is lugubrious, literature
"uninspiring, poetry neglected, enthusiasm
"discredited, and science, while adding
"largely to material possessions, has no
"spiritual consolation to offer. Little
"wonder, then, that melancholy abounds,
"and that enervates is epidemic." Does this
apply in the case of the European
communities of the Far East? Hardly,
we think. The grinding poverty which
throws a shadow over life in the old
countries is absent here, and we have no
"submerged tenth" to harrow our feelings
and make us suffer in sympathy with their
hardships and privations. True, one need
not go very far to look for the poor if we
take the natives into account, but in these
remote racial differences seems to constitute
even a more complete separation than dis-
tance. Looking, then, to the European com-
munities situated here, it would hardly strike
one that "society is destitute of real glad-
ness," though it is no doubt true that it is
"permeated by ostentation and jealousy."

A curious and rather amusing instance of
the ostentatiousness from Shanghai, where
it is gravely suggested that the falling off
in the attendance of the recent races was
due to the fact that in these hard times "as
"many new dresses cannot be purchased as
"before and therefore without the 'new
"dressing garment' ladies prefer to go up coun-
"try or at any rate to keep away from the
"grand stand and its enclosures." Still, no
one seeing the zest with which sports are
engaged in in the Far East, the energy
applied to recreation in all its forms,
the general spirit of living, and the keenness
that pervades the "men in the street,"
we must every day, can doubt that there
is a large amount of "real gladness" present
in local society. Looked at in another light,
however, the activity that at first blush
seems to indicate gladness may bear another
interpretation, for Sir James Crichton
Brown, after referring to the increase
shown by the statistics of suicides, says—
"The consumption of narcotics or pain-
"killers, of all kinds grows apace, and
"stimulants, narcotics, and narcotics,
"but many of the amusements in which we
"engage, and the incessant locomotion and
"globe-trotting on which we expend so much
"time and money. Men plunge into dis-
"tractions, or rush restlessly about, in order
"to forget or alleviate the pangs of the
"malady of thought." We prefer, however,
to look upon the activity displayed in the
field of recreation in the Far East, as a
genuine outflowing of healthy vitality
rather than an anxious taken to kill
despair. Proceeding, Sir James Crichton
Brown gives a presentation of
Mr. Pearson's pessimistic views as to the
future of the race and joins issue with him,
holding that there is no biological jus-
tification for his main conclusion of
"dead levelism" and also that taken piecemeal Mr. Pearson's positions are un-
tenable. But, he says, "speculation is less
"useful than observation, and it is in pro-
"portion to the remoteness of the events
"they refer to, but of practical interest in
"proportion to their proximity. The pos-
"sible failure of our English race measures
"concerns us more than the ultimate cooling
"of the earth, and the present price of fuel
"is a more vital consideration than that
"of these. And so the forecast of the time
"when refinement and breeding will be
"merged under vulgar democracy, and when
"distinctions of rank, fortune, intellect,
"and character will sink into insignificance
"under the overpowering blandness of the
"heavenly Chinese, is to us, as medical men,
"of minor and problematic importance in
"comparison with the measures that are to
"secure health and vigour to the next
"generation, and with the treatment of
"the diseases that rage around us." And,
addressing himself particularly to the audi-
ence of young men before him, the speaker
proceeded to urge the duty and induc-
ments to toil, concluding with the follow-
ing vision of the future:—"A wide
"and promising field stretches out before
"you, for to the medical toilers of the
"future will be given more and more power,
"not only to restore and prop up bent and
"cankered stems, but to shield the whole
"from blight and forward its lusty growth.
"Plants of prey, for so we may call the

"fashion fungi, will be hunted down as beasts
"of prey have been; sanitary science will
"promote the reign of health, and mental
"and moral hygiene will perhaps revolutionize
"natural and ethical evolution."

The P. O. steamer Japan left Singapore
for this port on the 11th inst. at 5 p.m.

The M. S. steamer Sydney, with the hon-
ourable French mail, left Shanghai at noon on
the 11th inst.

The P. M. steamer City of Peking, with mails,
left San Francisco for this port via Yokohama
on the 9th inst.

The Maria, one of the boats intended for the
navigation of the Upper Hongkong, has been safely
transported past the Rapids.

The Stamp Revenue last month was \$13,725,
being an increase of \$1,171 on the amount col-
lected in the corresponding month of last year.

The maximum temperature during October
was 85 and the minimum 67. The rainfall
amounted to 17.97 inches. There were 241 hours
of sunshine.

The death rate during the month of October
for the British and Foreign community
(Chinese population 271, and for the Chinese
community 233).

The takings of the Fair Market during the
four days of the Shanghai Races amounted to
\$24,055. The takings at the Spring Meeting
amounted to \$5,038.

A meeting of the Societe Francaise des Char-
bonnages de Tonkin is advertised for the 22nd
proximo, when proposals for the issue of debentures
and fresh stock will be submitted.

Mr. E. A. Morgan, late Chief Commissioner
Customs in Korea and who was formerly in
charge of the Korean Customs, arrived here
yesterday, with Mrs. Morgan, by the S. S. L.
steamer Dagers, on his way home on leave.

A Japanese contemporary says that the Gov-
ernment has resolved to appeal against the de-
cision rendered in H.M.C. Supreme Court at
Singapore in the case of the Japanese appeal, and
that Mr. Walford was expected to lodge the
petition in the British Court on the 6th inst.

A curious incident occurred at Shanghai the
other day. The agent of a Fire Insurance
Company, the N. C. Daily News, was ap-
plied to by a man who claimed to be a property
owner, and who asked the agent to grant a policy on a property
in the French Concession. The agent, who was
not familiar with the locality, refused to do so,
and the man, who was a Chinese, was very
angry, and threatened to sue the agent for
refusing to grant a policy on a property in the
French Concession. The agent, who was a
European, was very much amused by the man's
conduct, and he laughed at him. The man, who
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